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Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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07-36208 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Lebanon, in which she requests Lebanon to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative of Lebanon to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Minister of Culture and Minister of Foreign Affairs ad interim of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Tarik Mitri.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mitri (Lebanon) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/315, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, France, Italy, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

Members also have before them documents S/2007/281 and S/2007/286, containing two letters dated 15 May and 16 May 2007, respectively, addressed to the President of the Security Council from the Secretary-General.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I feel it incumbent upon me first and foremost to affirm our firm, established position of advocating the need to establish justice and oppose impunity, in line with the objective set out in the United Nations Charter of creating conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained.

Like others, we continue to call for the truth to be brought to light regarding the crime of the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Mr. Rafiq Hariri, pursuant to the desire of the fraternal Lebanese people, in all its factions, to punish the perpetrators of that outrageous crime.

In that spirit, we did not hesitate to support the establishment of the Independent International Investigation Committee, and voted in favour of relevant Security Council resolutions that paved the way for the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which enjoys the consensus endorsement of all Lebanese factions. In a letter dated 21 November 2006, addressed to the President of the Security Council, the State of Qatar clearly indicated its position on the legal aspects of the constitutional process by which agreement was reached between the Lebanese Government and the United Nations to establish the Tribunal.

The State of Qatar remains committed to helping Lebanon seek the truth, hold accountable all those involved in those crimes and bring them to justice, while placing the interests of fraternal Lebanon at the top of our priorities so as to ensure the maintenance of its independence, sovereignty, national unity and political stability.

While committed to uncovering the truth and to the establishment of the Special Tribunal to try whoever may be implicated in the crime, we feel that the draft resolution before the Council now entails legal encroachments known to all. That may not promote national détente and could further complicate the situation in a country that is at present in dire need of national cohesion and political stability.

In spite of those difficulties, we were quite willing to consider the draft resolution in a positive

spirit, with the aim of arriving at a consensus formula. The State of Qatar supports the establishment of the tribunal to punish the perpetrators of that outrageous crime. However, the insistence of the sponsors to present the draft resolution under Chapter VII — although all Security Council resolutions are binding, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter — goes beyond its designated aim of endorsing the establishment of the tribunal, especially in the light of the complicated and delicate political situation in Lebanon. We are simply apprehensive that the adoption of the draft resolution under Chapter VII will not serve to bring stability to that country.

In the light of the foregoing, we shall abstain in the voting on the draft resolution before us. At the same time, we will continue our good offices to bring points of view in Lebanon closer, in the interest of national unity and to ensure endorsement of the establishment of the tribunal through national mechanisms and in accordance with article 19 of the agreement to establish the tribunal.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): My delegation wishes to explain its position before the voting on the draft resolution on the special tribunal for Lebanon.

Impunity must not be tolerated; justice must prevail. Those who are found responsible for the assassination of the late Prime Minister Hariri and for other related assassinations must therefore be brought to justice. Indonesia is committed to support the pursuit of truth and justice. We support the work of the International Independent Investigation Commission and the extension of its mandate. We also have a strong commitment to making a constructive contribution to the efforts to promote peace and stability in Lebanon.

We take note of the Lebanese Prime Minister's request for the Council to take a binding decision on the establishment of a special tribunal for Lebanon. The draft resolution before us today has been based on that request. However, the Council should not fail to take into consideration that there is no unified voice among Lebanese leaders. The domestic political situation in Lebanon has created difficulty for the international community to act further on that request.

On the draft resolution, my delegation considers that it has changed the legal nature of article 19 of the agreement, which clearly states that the agreement shall enter into force on the day after the Government of Lebanon has notified the United Nations that the internal legal requirements for its entry into force have been met. If the draft resolution is adopted, it will bypass constitutional procedure and national processes.

There are no legal grounds for the Security Council to take over an issue that is domestic in nature. Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations stresses that nothing contained in the Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. Although that provision does not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII, the Security Council should not be involved in an exercise of interpreting, let alone taking over, the constitutional requirements that a State should comply with in the conduct of its authorities.

Before taking action on the draft resolution, which is intended to uphold justice, the Council should fully consider the domestic situation in Lebanon. The forceful interference by the Security Council in the national constitutional process as regards the establishment of the tribunal will not serve the greater interests of the Lebanese people, namely, reconciliation, national unity, peace and stability. The search for justice should neither create new problems nor exacerbate the already intricate situation in Lebanon.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, my delegation will abstain on the voting on the draft resolution.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): South Africa unequivocally condemns the assassinations of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Mr. Rafiq Hariri, and other Lebanese leaders. Indeed, there is a consensus within Lebanon and internationally on the need for the United Nations to assist the Lebanese authorities in their efforts to bring to justice those responsible for those grave crimes and to end all impunity. It is for that reason that the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission was set up to assist Lebanon with its criminal investigation. The decision was also taken to set up a special tribunal comprised of Lebanese and international jurists and prosecutors located outside Lebanon to prosecute any persons identified by the investigation and the Lebanese authorities as suspects in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and other Lebanese leaders.

South Africa fully supports the establishment of the tribunal and expects it to operate with impartiality and in accordance with Lebanese law and the highest international standards of criminal justice. My delegation regards Lebanese ownership of the tribunal as being of paramount importance and believes that it is incumbent upon the Lebanese authorities and people to reach a consensus position on the matter. Therefore, we still hold out the hope that the Lebanese parties can use the period specified in the draft resolution — between now and 10 June 2007 — to come to a political agreement on the tribunal, and not leave it to be imposed upon Lebanon.

We maintain that it is not appropriate for the Security Council to impose such a tribunal on Lebanon, especially under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, my delegation has frequently cautioned that the Security Council should be judicious in its invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter. We also do not believe that the Council has the right to bypass the procedures required by the Lebanese Constitution for the entry into force of an agreement with the United Nations. In discarding the Lebanese Constitution the Security Council is contravening its own decision regarding the need to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon.

The Security Council is mandated to act with impartiality and without bias. It cannot be seen to be taking sides in internal Lebanese politics. There is a danger that the imposition of the special tribunal on Lebanon without the consent of all the parties concerned will detrimentally affect the political stability of the already fragile Lebanese State. It will also politicize international criminal law, thereby undermining the very foundations of international law.

Furthermore, we have concerns about the precedent that this draft resolution will set. The principle of national consensus in establishing international tribunals is an important aspect of peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

Therefore, regrettably, South Africa will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (spoke in Chinese): The Chinese delegation will abstain on the draft resolution before us.

We deeply deplore the unfortunate assassination of Mr. Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon. China has consistently supported the fair and independent investigation of the case by the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission. We understand and support the request of all Lebanese parties for the establishment a special tribunal. We hope that that initiative will help to establish the truth as soon as possible, hold the perpetrators accountable and ensure justice for the victims.

China notes the political consensus among all Lebanese parties on the establishment of the Special Tribunal, as well as the divergence of views regarding procedural matters. We hope that political and diplomatic efforts will assist the parties in reaching a consensus as soon as possible. Only a special tribunal that enjoys universal support among all Lebanese factions can genuinely play a role in contributing to the achievement of justice and the maintenance of peace and stability in Lebanon. The point of departure and the focus of Security Council assistance should be to help to resolve real problems without further complicating an already very complex problem.

The establishment of the Special Tribunal is, in essence, Lebanon's own internal affair. Lebanon's domestic laws provide the legal basis for the operation. It is therefore only reasonable that Lebanon should, in accordance with its constitutional procedures, complete the domestic legal process required for the entry into force of the agreement. That is explicitly provided for in the agreement between United Nations and Lebanon on the establishment of the Tribunal. As a result of the special circumstances prevailing in Lebanon, that process has encountered major difficulties, which is a cause of great concern for us.

China believes that by invoking Chapter VII of the Charter, the resolution will override Lebanon's legislative organs by arbitrarily deciding on the date of the entry into force of the draft statute. This move will give rise to a series of political and legal problems that are likely to add to the uncertainty surrounding the already turbulent political and security situation in Lebanon and create a precedent of Security Council interference in the domestic affairs and legislative independence of a sovereign State. Such actions are likely to undermine the authority of the Council, as they are not in conformity with the long-term interests of either of the parties.

During the course of deliberations on the draft resolution before us, China, together with other members of the Council, expressed the hope that the sponsors would listen attentively and respond to our concerns by further revising the draft so as to make it more balanced and prudent. Regrettably, however, our recommendations were not adopted. That being the case, China will have no choice but to abstain.

The situation in the Middle East is extremely complex and convoluted. Various factors are interlinked, and one drop in a pool of water has a big ripple effect. It is our hope that at this difficult moment the Lebanese people will stand united in maintaining the security and stability of the nation and promoting the process of national reconciliation. It is essential that the Security Council, while addressing related issues, take fully into account the unique and complex situation in the Middle East and refrain from triggering new tensions or turbulence in the region.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently advocated establishing the truth with respect to the murder of Rafik Hariri. The perpetrators of that crime must be brought to justice. We fully share with the sponsors of the draft resolution their primary objective of preventing impunity and political violence in Lebanon. Given the fragility of the domestic situation in Lebanon, it is essential that the Council take a balanced and considered decision with a view to promoting harmonious relations among the Lebanese people.

Given the deep rift within Lebanese society and Government structures, this matter must be pursued so that the practical implementation of the draft resolution does not face serious difficulties that could lead to negative consequences for the country and the region as a whole. During consultations on the draft resolution, the Russian Federation made a number of constructive proposals that could have considerably improved the text. The draft should have focused on the implementation, under a Council decision, of the agreement between the United Nations and Lebanon, not on the entry into force of the agreement.

The arrangement chosen by the sponsors is dubious from the point of view of international law. The treaty between the two entities — Lebanon and the United Nations — by definition cannot enter into force on the basis of a decision by only one party. The constituent documents for the Tribunal, imposed by a unilateral decision of a United Nations body — that is, a Security Council resolution — essentially represent an encroachment upon the sovereignty of Lebanon.

We do not believe that the establishment of a special tribunal by decision of the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter is warranted. There is no basis for a reference to Chapter VII in the draft resolution. United Nations practice in establishing tribunals shows that Chapter VII has been invoked only for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which deal with crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes — that is, international crimes. The jurisdiction of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon would not cover such crimes. By its nature, the Tribunal is a mixed body with considerable Lebanese participation that operates on the basis of the applicable criminal procedures of Lebanon.

The Tribunal is being established for Lebanon, and it is important to heed the views of all the Lebanese people on this critical issue. In this regard, it would have been justifiable to have the preambular part of the draft resolution include a reference not only to the letter from the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Fouad Siniora, but also to that from the country's President, Emile Lahoud.

The language proposed by Russia has not been reflected in text of the draft resolution. Given that fact, we intend to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution. We regret the fact that putting a draft resolution with considerable legal shortcomings to a vote in such a hasty manner will not allow the Russian Federation and a number of other members of the Security Council to support it.

The President: The Council will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution (S/2007/315) before it.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Congo, France, Ghana, Italy, Panama, Peru, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

China, Indonesia, Qatar, Russian Federation, South Africa

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: ten votes in favour, none against and five abstaining. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1757 (2007).

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 1757 (2007) which, in response to the request of the Government of Lebanon, will enter into force on 10 June 2007, unless an internal solution is found before then with respect to the provisions of the Agreement on the establishment of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

This is an important decision for several reasons. The first is justice, as it opens the way to the trial of those guilty of the attack that took the life of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on 14 February 2005 and other terrorist attacks committed in Lebanon since October 2004. It establishes essential continuity with the International Independent Investigation Commission.

It is also important for peace in Lebanon. Justice cannot stand in the way of stability. The rejection of impunity, shared by all Lebanese, is an essential guarantee of peace.

It is, finally, an important decision for the credibility of the United Nations — and of the Security Council in particular, whose commitment to finding the truth in Lebanon has been unflagging.

The Council can take pride today in not having resigned itself to the ongoing impasse of which the Lebanese Government and the Secretary-General and his Legal Counsel had on several occasions informed it. The Council can be proud that it has shouldered its responsibility by helping Lebanon to overcome the obstacles that it was facing and to proceed along the path to recovering its independence and its sovereignty.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 1757 (2007). The proposed Tribunal is vital for Lebanon, for justice and for the region. The establishment of the Tribunal through Lebanese internal procedures had been thwarted. The Council, for its part, has been asked to adopt a binding decision to create the Tribunal.

This is not a capricious intervention or interference in the domestic political affairs of a sovereign State. It is a considered response by the Council, properly taken, to a request from the Government of Lebanon for action to overcome a continued impasse in Lebanon's internal procedures, despite long and serious efforts to find a solution within Lebanon.

It is a long-held United Kingdom view that, to make this decision binding, it was necessary for such a resolution, inter alia, to be taken under Chapter VII. The use of Chapter VII carries no connotation other than that it makes this resolution binding. That is why the United Kingdom supported this resolution. We hope that all parties in Lebanon will now be able to move forward together to take the necessary decisions to build upon this formal establishment of the Tribunal.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru decided to support this resolution because of its commitment to the fight against impunity and its firm position on combating terrorism and because it is of the view that this resolution is the only way to overcome the legislative impasse regarding the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, given the need to ensure that justice prevails, which is essential in promoting peace and security.

Peru has taken into account that the majority of the Lebanese parliament has given ample proof of its strong determination to approve the agreement establishing a special tribunal to try the persons who have been identified by the International Independent Investigation Commission as the presumed perpetrators of the politically motivated crimes executed by means of terrorist acts. Therefore, we hope that the Lebanese parliament can be convened so that it can complete the internal constitutional process for adoption and ratification within the time schedule envisaged in the resolution we have just adopted.

In supporting this resolution, given the exceptional political circumstances that exist, Peru reaffirms its respect for and commitment to international law. Thus, recognizing the particular circumstances of the case, we believe that the agreement signed between Lebanon and the United Nations by means of a resolution, in exercise of the powers of the Security Council as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, must not constitute a precedent beyond this particular case.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium voted for the resolution under consideration. Through this resolution, the Security Council confirms the consistent stance that has governed its continuous commitment to stability and peace in a sovereign and independent Lebanon. The duty of justice and the fight against impunity are essential for the stability of Lebanon. This constancy has always guided the Council in its work with respect to the establishment of the International Independent Investigation Commission and of the international tribunal.

It is this same assessment that guided my delegation to support and sponsor this new resolution. This resolution does not prejudice an agreement that remains to be reached among the Lebanese and which we continue to call for. By adopting resolution 1757 (2007) today, the Security Council has provided unreserved support to the efforts of the Government to strengthen the rule of law that all Lebanese deserve.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): We welcome the adoption of resolution 1757 (2007). We have supported this resolution because we believe that impunity should not be allowed and tolerated. The perpetrators of any crime have to be brought to justice. The rule of law must be respected everywhere and by everybody. The establishment of the Tribunal is necessary for a thorough investigation of the cases of politically motivated violence — in fact, terrorism — and for bringing perpetrators of these outrageous crimes to justice.

As all available means have unfortunately been exhausted on an issue that could not be solved through Lebanese constitutional means, the Security Council had to resume its responsibility and ensure the implementation of the agreement between the United Nations and the Lebanese Republic through a legally binding resolution.

We believe that the resolution of this issue will contribute to the stabilization of the situation in Lebanon and to the process of national reconciliation.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I just want to add my voice to the voices of the other sponsors. With this resolution, we have wanted to demonstrate a strong support for the Government of Lebanon, a strong support for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, and a belief that justice is a condition for the reconciliation and therefore the stability of the country. We truly hope that in the coming days and weeks the internal forces and players in Lebanon will find a way and the right path to implement the agreement.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States of America.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 1757 (2007) on the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. By adopting this resolution, the Security Council has demonstrated its commitment to the principle that there shall be no impunity for political assassinations in Lebanon or elsewhere. Those who killed Rafik Hariri and so many others will be brought to justice and held responsible for their crimes. The Tribunal will also serve to deter future political assassinations. Those who might be tempted to commit similar crimes will know that there will be consequences for perpetuating political violence and intimidation in Lebanon.

We know that it was necessary and right for the Council to act now. The Council approved the Tribunal Agreement and Statute on 21 November 2006. Since that time, the legitimate and democratically elected Government of Lebanon and the parliamentary majority have tried, using every possible means, to convince the Speaker of parliament to fulfil his constitutional responsibility to convene parliament so that final action on the Tribunal could be taken, but to no avail.

Several influential parties visited Lebanon in an effort to find a framework within which parliament could be convened. These included the Arab League, United Nations Legal Counsel Nicolas Michel and the Secretary-General himself. After five months of tireless efforts to find a solution to the impasse facing his country, Prime Minister Siniora sent the Secretary-General a letter on 14 May (S/2007/281, annex) asking that the matter be put before the Security Council so that it could take a binding decision to establish the Special Tribunal. The Secretary-General endorsed the Prime Minister's request one day later, after concluding that all diplomatic efforts had been exhausted.

We would have preferred that the Lebanese ratify the Tribunal Agreement and Statute, but we know that that was not possible. No one can say that the Lebanese Government, the Secretary-General or the Security Council failed to pursue every possible option, short of Council action on the Tribunal. But those opposed to

the Tribunal made sure that there were no such options available.

We have heard many voices warn of the risks to peace and stability in Lebanon. We urge all parties to act responsibly in the days ahead and to abide by their obligations to support Lebanon's sovereignty and political independence.

For our part, we concluded that failure to act in support of Lebanon was unacceptable. There can be no peace or stability without justice.

In conclusion, the United States reaffirms its support for Lebanon. With the adoption of this resolution, we are confident that the Security Council will live up to its commitment to support Lebanon in its pursuit of justice.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I shall now invite His Excellency Mr. Tarek Mitri, Minister of Culture and Minister for Foreign Affairs ad interim of Lebanon, to make a statement.

Mr. Mitri (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like, on behalf of the Government of Lebanon, to warmly thank the Security Council for expressing its constant support for the independence, sovereignty, security and freedom of Lebanon on the basis of the principles underpinning international legitimacy and the Charter of the United Nations. The Council has never hesitated — particularly over the past two years — to express its sympathy and support for and commitment to Lebanon and its independence.

Indeed, ever since the Security Council adopted resolution 1595 (2005), which established an International Independent Investigation Commission to inquire into the assassination of the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and members of his entourage, and in its efforts to identify the perpetrators of that terrorist crime and other political assassinations and attempted assassinations perpetrated since October 2004, the Council has consistently supported Lebanon. It has adopted important resolutions to ensure that criminals are brought to justice and that there is no impunity. Those resolutions have been binding to ensure that justice is done.

The Council has left no room for doubt in expressing its commitment to Lebanon. Last summer, the Council supported our country when we were the target of a destructive and iniquitous Israeli aggression. The Council called upon the international community to play its role by bringing an end to that aggression and providing the necessary assistance and support at various levels to protect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Last week, the Council reaffirmed its support for Lebanon once again by condemning terrorist acts aimed at undermining our security, stability and vitality, as well as the role played by my country — a role based on moderation, openness, democracy and freedom.

Today, the Security Council has adopted a text that forms the basis for the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in accordance with a methodology that has been very professionally and meticulously worked out so that it meets the highest legal criteria. I wish to express our warmest thanks to the sponsors of the resolution and to those who voted in favour of it, thereby enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations in carrying out its responsibilities and helping Lebanon to do justice and protect peace and security.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express my warmest thanks to those States that abstained in the voting. Despite the reservations that they expressed regarding the resolution just adopted by the Council, they once again reaffirmed their commitment to the paramount importance for the principle of justice of the establishment of a special tribunal for Lebanon to identify criminals and deter the undermining of our freedom and sovereignty.

Our warmest thanks go also to the Secretary-General for his personal commitment to remain seized of the situation in Lebanon and for the sympathy and interest he has shown with respect to that situation, which has been among his highest priorities, owing to his unswerving commitment to the establishment of a tribunal. We wish moreover to thank his colleagues for their efforts.

We commend the positive atmosphere that has supported the cooperation between the Secretary-General's representatives and the Government of Lebanon. We are where we are today as a result of long-term joint endeavours by the Lebanese Government and the United Nations. Every opportunity has been taken in order to adopt the Statute of the Tribunal, to implement the agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Lebanon in

accordance with the provisions of the Lebanese constitution — and to ensure that that is done also by the Lebanese parliament.

We worked for the establishment of the Tribunal because unanimity existed within Lebanon, as reflected in the resolution and in our national dialogue. There was also international Arab unanimity regarding the establishment of the Tribunal, but the path that led us to the adoption of the resolution was strewn with obstacles. Parliament was unable to meet to discuss the establishment of the Tribunal, despite the fact that a majority of parliamentarians appealed for such a meeting.

This is now an opportunity for the Lebanese to recover their fundamental rights, first and foremost their right to embark on the path towards the truth. The truth must be raised up against those who have been involved in any way in terrorist crimes against our leaders, beginning with the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and including the murders of journalists, parliamentarians, writers and illustrious academics.

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon will certainly act as a deterrent to terrorist activities, and today's resolution will therefore serve to protect the Lebanese people, enhance our freedom, allow us to rid ourselves of such threats, and thus move forward.

Today's resolution does not reflect the victory of one party over another. Justice is the victor. Nor does it mean that one group of Lebanese now believe themselves to be stronger than the others or to enjoy the support of the international community to the detriment of others. On the contrary, the resolution will help to strengthen the rule of law and to bolster the foundations of democracy. It will enhance the independence of the judiciary vis-à-vis the political sphere, as sought by all the Lebanese people. It is therefore in the interests of all Lebanese who seek to advance justice hand in hand with stability.

No one can hope to compel the Lebanese to choose between their quest for justice and their right to peace, security and stability, nor is it acceptable under any standard for the Lebanese to be forced to choose one path over another or for responsibility for crimes perpetrated against Lebanese to be ascribed to the victims. Under the resolution adopted today and previous resolutions, the Council has expressed its commitment to justice and stability. It also recalls all the assassinations that have taken place in Lebanon and the prevailing situation there, which threatens peace and security not only in the region, but throughout the world.

Today, therefore, we can only commemorate the victims throughout Lebanon, the martyr Prime Minister Hariri and all martyrs brought low by the hands of terrorists. We say to them that truth is the path to freedom, justice and reconciliation. Therein lies the salvation of Lebanon.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.